THE NEW
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STUNNING NUMBERS

59,938 Total Covid related fatalities in China between December 8 and January 12

5,503 Deaths due to respiratory failure caused by Covid

54,435 Fatalities from other ailments combined with Covid since Dec 8

80.3 years AVERAGE AGE OF THOSE WHO HAD DIED

90%+ FATALITIES ABOVE THE AGE OF 65 YRS

Emergency peak over?

2.9 mn Patients visited fever clinics in China on Dec 23

477,000 Nationwide fever by Jan 12

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STAGGERING 60,000 COVID DEATHS IN CHINA IN A MONTH

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

WEEKS after insisting it was not necessary to put out the exact Covid fatality count from the latest wave of infections, China on Saturday revealed its data for a month, which took the global community's breath away. Its National Health Commission (NHC) revealed the country had recorded as many as 59,938 Covid-related deaths between December 8 and January 12.

While the sudden burst of glasnost was certainly welcome, the toll is expected to be higher as the NHC data is on deaths at hospitals alone. The jaw-dropping figure was in contrast to the few dozen deaths that had officially been recorded for December despite visual evidence of hospitals overflowing with patients and crematoriums being overrun by the Covid surge in the country.

China's official toll has now gone up to just 65,210 since the coronavirus first broke out in its city of Wuhan in December 2019, indicating the extent of its data doctoring. The World Health Organization had on Wednesday rapped China for heavily underreporting the number of Covid deaths from the current wave.

On the positive side, the peak of the latest wave appears to have passed based on the decline in the number of patients visiting fever clinics, NSC official Jiao Yahui said. The daily number of people going to those clinics fell by 83% on Thursday, he said (see box).

"The number of elderly patients dying from illness is relatively large, which suggests that we should pay more attention to elderly patients and try our best to save their lives," said Jiao in a press meet.

> **In the future, relevant data will be released to the public in a timely manner in accordance with relevant provisions for Class B infectious diseases** — Jiao Yahui, National Health Commission official

Amid the intense Covid surge, when China reopened its borders to international travellers on January 8, a host of countries, including India and the US, imposed mandatory Covid tests on arrivals from China. Beijing retaliated by suspending issuance of new visas to fliers from South Korea and Japan.

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE RETURN OF THE KHANS
PLUS 12 PAGES
MAGAZINE

ISRO axes Joshimath sat images

AMIT MUKHERJEE @ New Delhi

IN a bid to avoid confusion and panic among people, the National Disaster Management Authority has directed government-run research institutions not to interact with media or share data on Joshimath on social media platforms.

The gag order follows media reports on the rapid rate of subsidence in Joshimath, based on data released by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)-ISRO.

The NDMA, in an office memorandum dated 13 January issued to the heads of various departments and institutions, directed them to "refrain from posting anything on media platforms until the final report of the expert group is released."

Scientists inspect the affected area at Sunil village in Joshimath on Saturday | ANI

In its directive, the NDMA noted: "It is observed that the government institutions are releasing data related to the subject matter on social media platforms... They are also interacting with media with their own interpretation of the situation. It is creating confusion not only among affected residents but also among citizens of the country." P10

EXPRESS READ

Cong MP dies during Bharat Jodo Yatra

Chandigarh: Seventy-six-year-old Congress Jalandhar MP Santokh Singh Chaudhary died after suffering a cardiac arrest during the Bharat Jodo Yatra in Phillaur of Punjab on Saturday. Chaudhary, a two-time MP, was walking with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi when he fainted | P10

Goa moves SC against Kalasa-Banduri project

Belagavi: The Goa government on Saturday moved the Supreme Court seeking to halt Karnataka from going ahead with the Kalasa-Banduri project. The Centre had recently given Karnataka the green signal to go ahead with the project | P4

BBMP freezes over 40,000 old job codes

Bengaluru: The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has frozen over 40,000 job codes from 2010-2011 to 2020-2021 to prevent misuse by contractors. "With this we can save ₹7,931 crore", said Special Commissioner (Finance) Jayaram Rajpura | P2

Spl grants for women in state budget: Bommai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

FINANCIAL assistance for women to take care of their households will be announced in the state budget to be presented by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on February 17, ahead of the state Assembly elections which are scheduled to be held in a few months.

Speaking to the media in Bengaluru, the CM said financial aid will be given to women heads of families to run their households, to take care of day-to-day needs and also medical expenses. "The allocation could be between Rs 1,000 and Rs 3,000. We are working on the details and resource mobilisation," he said.

The CM said the government will be launching 'Stree Samarthya Yojane' this month to generate self-employment for around five lakh women in the state. The Stree Shakti groups will be given Rs 5 lakh financial assistance and market linkage for their products, he said. P4

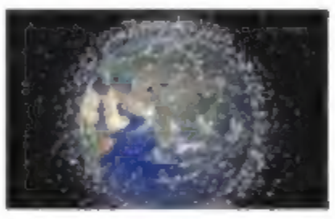
Indian developing orbiting fuel stations to extend satellites' life

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

WITH air-to-air refueling proving the capability of enhancing long-haul flights, an Indian scientist is now eyeing to take a similar technology to the next level — space. With an increasing number of satellites orbiting Earth, an entrepreneur-cum-researcher at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is developing an in-orbit satellite refueling technology with an orbital fuel station and servicing centre in space. This would be the first such venture in the world.

EXPRESS EXCLUSIVE

The aim is to extend the life of on-mission satellites to reduce satellite launch frequencies, avoid higher costs of sending new satellites to replace old ones, and ensure lesser space debris in the future.



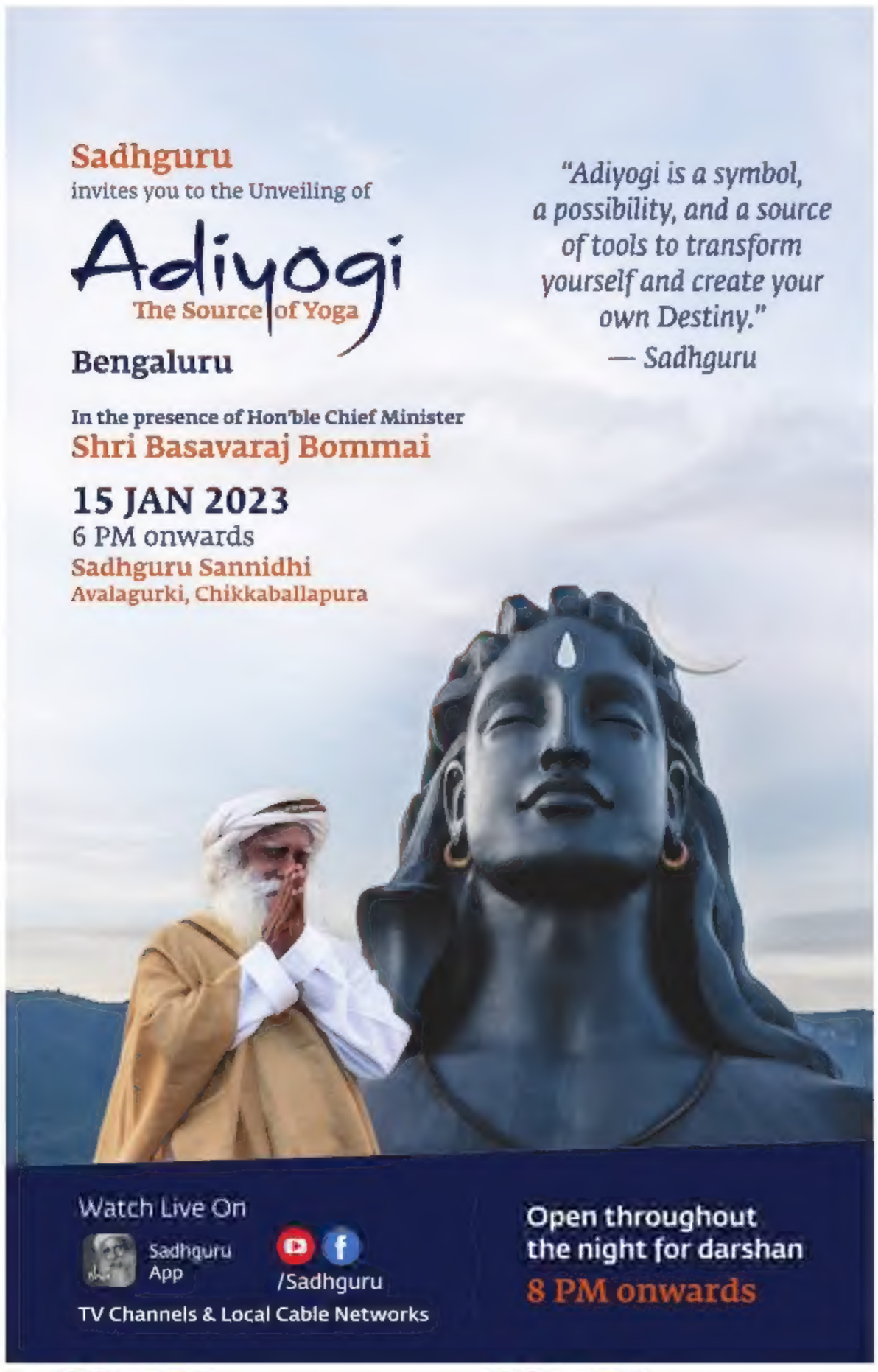
The 34-year-old entrepreneur-researcher Sakthikumar R already has a start-up named 'OrbitAID Aerospace', which is incubated at the MSME Centre of Excellence at IISc.

"It is developing an in-orbit re-fueling technology for satellite life extension. We are also planning to build an orbital fuel station in space soon," Sakthikumar told *The New Sunday Express*.

The life cycle of a satellite depends upon its fuel capacity. Lack of fuel and servicing can push a healthy, functioning satellite sooner into the junk orbit away from common operational orbits.

He said the tanker satellite will go to the customer satellite and refuel it without affecting its operations.

CONTINUED ON: P7



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FRAUDSTERS
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